



A European Parliament study finds numerous shortcomings with the Lyon-Turin railway project. © erysipel / pixelio.de

### Criticism of Alpine traffic policies in Brussels

**Short-sighted, inadequate, inconsistent: a recently published study commissioned by the European Parliament questions the policies and projects intended to shift freight transport onto rail. Why European support for the Lyon-Turin link is crumbling and why the Swiss electorate will have the last word.**

The updated study on the European TEN-T projects was presented to the Transport Committee of the European Parliament in early November: these projects relate to the major traffic axes intended to connect European centres. Both the planned railway line with a base tunnel between Lyon in France and Turin in Italy, and the Gotthard Base Tunnel in Switzerland, form part of the analysis.

### Numerous question marks over the Lyon-Turin link

The conclusion of the study on the planned new railway link between Lyon and Turin makes sobering reading. Important milestones in the planning of this major project have been missed, the cost and benefits of alternative variants have never been investigated side by side nor has there been an Environmental Impact Assessment according to the EU Directive. The first publicly available cost-benefit analysis was not produced by the promoters until 2012, i.e. twenty years after planning began. There is still no economic analysis available for the period during which the route will actually be in operation. Finally, there is a lack of transparency and public participation. On the other hand, the study questions the need for the new rail line: the calculations are doubtful, as they assume that ever more freight will have to be transported on this route. The capacity of the existing line is adequate for the next 20 years. The European Commission is now no longer committing to financing the entire project from the outset, but will review its funding contributions for each construction phase. Michael Cramer, chairman of the European Parliament's Transport Committee, sees in this reaction the beginning of a distancing from the project.

### Fréjus und Gotthard: road tunnels harm rail

The Lyon-Turin railway tunnel is also queried by the authors of the study because Switzerland, France and Italy are all pushing for new road tunnels. The new and expensive railways will thus remain unused. This concern is also shared by a broad alliance of over 40 organisations in Switzerland. The Gotthard Base Tunnel will be open to rail transport in 2016, at a cost of 12 billion Swiss francs. At the same time, Government and Parliament want to expand the existing road tunnel by a second tube on account of the refurbishment works now due. The politicians' promise is that each tube will subsequently only see single-lane use. But even today, emergency lanes are frequently converted into traffic lanes in certain sections. Signatures are currently being collected for a referendum against a second tube. The Swiss electorate may be able to decide on a coherent transport policy by June 2015: with the 1994 article on the protection of the Alps, the Swiss have already established a constitutional limit on transit traffic.

The decision to open the second tube of the Fréjus tunnel to heavy traffic has however already been made: France and Italy have decided to open the tube, which has been built for safety reasons at first.

## Alpine countries must pull together

According to the European Parliament study, the expansion of the motorway through the Fréjus tunnel runs counter to both the planned rail link between Lyon and Turin and the Union's common climate policy. All road projects facilitating the passage of trucks and all railway projects that have no appropriate accompanying policies should therefore be scrapped, say the authors of the study. A coherent policy and incentives for a modal shift from road to rail are needed for the entire region. The first priority should therefore be the creation of an Alpine-wide framework with the aim of getting goods quickly and effectively onto the rail network.

Source and further information: [http://www.alpeninitiative.ch/nein-2te-roehre/medien/medieninfos/141007\\_pk.html](http://www.alpeninitiative.ch/nein-2te-roehre/medien/medieninfos/141007_pk.html), (fr), <http://www.karimadelli.com/index.php?rub=medias&pg=dans-la-presse&spg=&act=afp-bruxelles-juge-surdimensionne-le-projet-de-tgv-lyon-turin> (fr) , <http://www.cipra.org/en/publications/update-on-investments-in-large-ten-t-projects-study-provisional-version>, <http://www.elysee.fr/communiqués-de-presse/article/sommet-franco-italien-3/> (fr), <http://www.acac73.org/2014/11/fin-du-creusement-du-deuxieme-tube-du-tunnel-routier-du-frejus-une-victoire-pour-la-predominance-du-traffic-poids-lourds-dans-les-alp> (fr)

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### Point of view



Federica Corrado is President of CIPRA Italy © CIPRA

### Protecting the Alps – the responsibility of people

**The diversity of the Alps is a challenge that at the same time holds great potential. It is up to the new German presidency of the Alpine Convention to put this into effect, states Federica Corrado, President of CIPRA Italy.**

More than ever before, the Alps are placed in the midst of territorial development dynamics on different levels – from the Macro-Regional Strategy for the Alps (EUSALP) and the Alpine Convention to local initiatives and projects. These are moving at different speeds. The aim and challenge for the actions of all Alpine regions however remains their territorial cohesion and competitiveness.

Peripheral regions are now test-beds for new models of living, experiments with new forms of agriculture are taking place in the Alpine valleys and old crafts are being revived. In densely populated areas, measures are being taken to reduce CO2 emissions and create social housing, just as in cities that are some distance from the Alps.

During its presidency of the Alpine Convention between 2012 and 2014, Italy commissioned a number of working groups to address such issues as reducing the digital divide, the demographic transition, the influx into mountainous areas, the development of new forms of tourism and the role of UNESCO World Heritage Sites, to name but a few. At the centre was the idea of an inhabited mountain region seen from the perspective of stakeholders and networks: today, as we approach a Macro-Regional Strategy for the Alps, this idea is even more important.

The incoming German presidency of the Alpine Convention must now more than ever ensure that the guidelines of the Convention are applied. When we talk about quality of life in the Alps, we must be aware of the specific regional differences that exist there. The Alpine Convention's "Declaration on Population and Culture" should now be reviewed, as proposed by CIPRA Italy at its workshop on the occasion of the Alpine conference held on 20 November 2014 in Turin: emphasis was placed on the importance of pursuing a standard of living in the Alps based on a reduced consumption of resources, as well as of a strengthened Alpine culture.

This awareness of our own identity is a prerequisite for dialogue with non-Alpine areas, as envisaged in the Macro-Regional Strategy as well as in certain national laws. This broad dialogue must also create the foundations to promote resource-efficient lifestyles and economic systems in the Alps to ensure that the Alps of the future are creative, thriving and innovative, capable of acting as a pioneer for other regions.

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## News from the CIPRA



Participants at the CIPRA annual conference discussing living well in the Alps. © Antoine Berger

### CIPRA presents pioneers of sustainable living

**Lifestyles and economies that use fewer resources require new thinking and action that go beyond narrow limits and consumerism. This is the conclusion of the CIPRA annual conference held in Annecy, France.**

Changing to a more sensitive use of the precious resources in the Alps is possible in all areas of life, as demonstrated by CIPRA at its annual conference, held from 13 to 15 November 2014 – under the motto “Living well in the Alps!” – in Annecy, France. From new economic concepts such as the “sharing economy”, which emphasises social innovation rather than the traditional model of unlimited growth, to the role of spatial planning in the design of places that are fit for the future, the aim is the development and implementation of new social values.

Such profound changes may often appear too complex to people. Clear examples are needed to illustrate the opportunities of a new, community-oriented lifestyle. The conference therefore presented pioneers who identified alternatives and thus encouraged others to embrace change. One of these pioneers is the hotelier Michil Costa from South Tyrol in Italy, who runs his business according to the principles of the “collaborative economy”. His credo: “We have to learn to think like the mountains – for the long term”. For him, this means business based on co-operation, democratic participation and fairness, with respect for the boundaries of nature. The success of an enterprise should not merely be measured in numbers, but also against a regularly drawn up balance sheet detailing the company’s social and environmental impact.

The numerous ideas for a sustainable future in the Alps developed by the around 150 participants at the conference will serve as markers and inspiration for further work on this topic.

Further information: <http://www.cipra.org/de/cipra/ueber-uns/jahresfachtagungen/cipra-jahresfachtagung-2014> (de/fr/it/sl)

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## News from the Alps



A road represents an obstacle to animals and plants. The French Alpine regions are improving ecological networks. © Rainer Sturm / pixelio.de

### French Alps now almost networked

**The French regions of Rhône-Alpes and Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur have for the first time enshrined migration routes for plants and animals in legislation – a first in the French mountains.**

France wants to preserve its biodiversity by means of a matrix of ecological corridors, thus enabling the migration of plants and animals. The regions have to implement this policy via an appropriate planning instrument, the SRCE (*Schéma Régional de Cohérence Ecologique*). In Summer 2014 the Rhône-Alpes Region became one of the first regions in France to adopt such a binding strategy. The region of Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur (PACA) is also close to adopting the law, which now needs the approval of the Regional Council and the Prefect. The public consultation required beforehand was completed in early Summer 2014. The two Alpine regions are thus one step ahead of France's other mountain regions – the Pyrenees, Vosges, Jura and Massif Central – in terms of ecological networking.

The SRCE determines where ecological corridors in the region should run. Municipalities and others involved in land-use planning must take these into account, for example when building roads.

Source and further information: <http://biodiversite.rhonealpes.fr/spip.php?rubrique64> (fr), <http://www.rhone-alpes.developpement-durable.gouv.fr/le-schema-regional-de-coherence-r208.html> (fr), <http://www.paca.developpement-durable.gouv.fr/schema-regional-de-coherence-r349.html> (fr)



New areas are still being developed for ski tourism in the Alps – without regard for nature or landscape. © Gesellschaft fuer oekologische Forschung

### Ill-timed winter tourism developments throughout the Alps

**Despite rising temperatures and doubts about profitability, some Alpine regions are building new winter sports facilities. But who will pay the bill?**

In the municipality of Bohinj, at an altitude of 1500 metres, there are now plans to build Slovenia's first cable car system designed to run all year round, with new sports and leisure facilities to be constructed on an area covering 150 hectares. Initiators, including the world's second largest cable car operator, are hoping for financial support from the Slovenian government. The nearby ski resort of Koblja is meanwhile in decline.

The project was approved by government in August 2014, despite many issues remaining unresolved. What about the longer term economic prospects? Will a ski area of this size and at this altitude still be viable in the future, given the rise in temperatures?

On the other side of the Alps, in Italy's Aosta Valley, a new ski area is also being planned to connect the existing ski areas of Monte Rosa and Cervino-Matterhorn. This would damage a

hitherto unspoilt landscape. Nature conservation organisations in Italy are calling for other regional development models and alternatives to the monoculture of Alpine ski tourism. The project's profitability is also being called into question: the planned link between the ski resorts will cost 65 million euros, and already one of the contractors involved, Monterosa Ski, has had to be subsidised by the Region to be able to continue to operate its existing facilities. In addition to the ski area, the necessary tourism infrastructure, such as hotels and roads, would have to be built from scratch.

Source and further information: CIPRA Italia, CIPRA Slovenija, Bohinjske novice št. 9  
<http://www.gore-ljudje.net/informacije/112115/> (sl),  
<http://www.24ur.com/novice/gospodarstvo/investitor-dobil-gradbeno-dovoljenje-najvecje-smucisce-v-sloveniji-naj-bi-zazivelo-ze-letos.html> (sl), <http://www.dislivelli.eu/blog/cime-bianche-no-sweet.html> (it), <http://www.loscarpone.cai.it/news/items/il-coordinamento-noi-nelle-alpi-contrario-ad-un-nuovo-collegamento-funiviario-sul-monte-rosa.html> (it)

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## Agenda

**Impacts of climate change on mountain environment dynamics**, 01.12.2014. [More...](#)

**CCAlps final conference: policies for creative and cultural industries**, 01.12.2014, Milano/IT. [More...](#)

**WIKIAlps final conference**, 04.12.2014, Bozen/Bolzano/IT. [More...](#)

**CCSH15: 1st International Academic Conference on Climate Change and Sustainable Heritage**, 18.02.2014-20.02.2014, Graz/AT. [More...](#)

**Climate Change Impacts at The National Level: Known Trends, Unknown Tails, and Unknowables**, 05.12.2014, Zurich/CH, Organisation: CER-ETH and CEPE. [More...](#)

## Strange but true!

...We now have a new hero factory, Trentino, that is "bearing" heavily on the Alps. A female bear died there in September 2014, although she was supposed to simply be put to sleep for a few hours by means of a tranquilliser fired from a gun. But now Daniza has become a martyr of the nature conservation movement, with vigils being held in her memory. The wheels of the hero factory have been set in motion, just as they were some 200 years ago in Mantua, where Andreas Hofer was executed by firing squad. He had led the Tyrolean uprising against Bavaria and Napoleon, and is reputed to have called out "You really are poor shots" at his execution. His death made Hofer a hero of Tyroleans both north and south of the Brenner Pass and, since then, statues of him have appeared throughout the region. Streets are named after him and his death is commemorated in the Tyrolean anthem. One day, then, we may even see a street that "bears" the name Daniza.

Source and further information:  
[http://www.orso.provincia.tn.it/binary/pat\\_orso/novita/DOSSIER\\_ORSO\\_TRENTIN\\_O.1411126621.pdf](http://www.orso.provincia.tn.it/binary/pat_orso/novita/DOSSIER_ORSO_TRENTIN_O.1411126621.pdf) (it),  
<http://www.museum.passeier.it/de/helden-hofer>